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RR RUEHGI
DE RUEHNJ #0094 0311137
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 311137Z JAN 07
FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4880
INFO RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 1350
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 0894
RUEHGI/AMEMBASSY BANGUI 1304
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 0396
RUEHLC/AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE 0964
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1634
RUEHNM/AMEMBASSY NIAMEY 2897
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 2088
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 1466
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0947
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0901

UNCLAS NDJAMENA 000094

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: BEXP EFIN PGOV PREL CD

SUBJECT: CHAD: PRESIDENT DEBY ASKS TO BUY FOUR C-130 AIRCRAFT

REF: A. NDJAMENA 43

1B. WALL-ASHRAF EMAIL MESSAGE OF 1/30/07

11. (U) President Idriss Deby Itno has sent a letter to the President requesting approval for the purchase of four new C-130 aircraft under the Foreign Military Sales program. Dated January 19 and delivered by Chadian Ambassador to the United States Mahamoud Bechir to the Ambassador January 30, the letter asks for immediate delivery of one C-130H model from existing U.S. Air Force stocks using presidential drawdown authority. It also requests authorization to obtain three newer C-130J aircraft, including one to be diverted from existing USAF production lines for expedited delivery.

12. (U) In his meeting with the Ambassador, Ambassador Bechir stressed the urgency of obtaining these aircraft to meet Chad's security and humanitarian needs. The Ambassador said we look forward to working together on Chad's request, but advised that some aspects, including the use of presidential drawdown authority, will pose difficulties and require careful review.

13. (U) In other activities involving the proposed purchase of the C-130 aircraft, Air Force Major (and DOD C-130 expert) Jim Mueller was in N'Djamena January 21-23 for technical discussions. On January 25 the Ambassador received Jean-Christophe Heidsieck, Ambassador of the Sovereign Order of Malta in Cameroon. Heidsieck had represented Lockheed Martin in its sale of two C-130 aircraft to Chad in the late 1980's. He was visiting Chad to pursue various business interests, including as a consultant for the company in its current efforts in Chad.

14. (SBU) Comment: President Deby has taken a personal interest in this purchase. As noted in ref A, we question Chad's need for four new aircraft, whether it can afford them, whether other aircraft would be more suitable, and whether the purchase would conform with its commitments to the IMF and World Bank on managing oil revenues. The request also raises concerns about perceptions that the aircraft will be used to protect a regime that has stymied credible democratic reforms. While we are prepared to concur in a decision to approve the transaction, we believe full due diligence is required. End Comment

¶5. (U) We have sent by email to AF/C a scanned copy of the letter (ref B) and will forward the original by pouch.
WALL